

## Nursed a Wounded Brother

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# Nursed A Wounded Brother

By COL. JOSEPH H. SWENEY<sup>1</sup>

The Civil war battles of Tupelo and Old Town Creek occurred on July 14th and 15th, respectively, 1864, just fifty years ago today. If ever I shall undertake to write the story of what preceded and followed the events occurring about that time, it must be at another time, and "that will be another story." I then was eighteen years old, a sergeant in Company K, 27th regiment, Iowa infantry, having been in the service since August 12, 1862.

In the summer of 1864, Sherman was making his advance on Atlanta, and the Sixteenth corps, of which our regiment was a part, together with all of the other troops west of Sherman's operations and line of communications, was engaged in protecting his rear, and communications between Nashville and Atlanta, from attacks by Forrest, Chalmers, Wheeler, and others. The rebels held the Mobile and Ohio railroad running south through Corinth, Tupelo, Okolona and Meridian to Mobile. Forrest's headquarters were at Okolona. He had, just before, almost completely wiped out a division of General Sturgiss, one of the best equipped little armies of about eight thousand men ever organized in the West, and which had been sent out to find and fight him. That defeat of Sturgiss was one of the most inexcusable disas-

<sup>1</sup>Colonel Sweney was the grand-uncle of Mrs. George Mills of Des Moines. This article was written for his brother, Charles, on July 15, 1914, and is now in possession of the son of the latter, Marshall Sweney of St. Paul. Colonel Sweney came to Mitchell county, Iowa, with his parents, in 1855, remaining on the farm near Osage until 1862, when he enlisted in the Union army, and was mustered out of service in August, 1865. He became lieutenant-colonel of the Sixth regiment, Iowa national guards in 1880, and later was made brigadier-general and inspector-general for the state. He engaged in the banking business at Osage with his brother; was a graduate of the law department of the State University of Iowa, and for many years practiced law at Osage; served as state senator in the Twentieth, Twenty-first and Twenty-second General Assemblies of Iowa, and was president protem of the senate the last session served; elected in 1888 to the U. S. congress from the Fourth Iowa district and also served in the Fifty-first congress.

ters occurring to our arms during the war. The men were as good as ever wore blue, but when attacked by Forrest they were utterly unprepared and incompetently or drunkenly led. In the vicinity of Tupelo I myself saw in the woods the bones, and fragments of the blue uniforms, of men who had fallen in the rout of the battle and pursuit; and who had been devoured by the birds and beasts within the preceding week or ten days.

To rectify and avenge in part this disaster, and also keep Forrest and all of the forces in his command from molesting or annoying Sherman, our corps, commanded by Major General A. J. Smith, and a brigade of cavalry commanded by General Mower, were sent from the vicinity of Memphis, southeast, by way of Holly Springs and Pontotoc, toward Okolona, with orders to find Forrest and whip him. It was oftener more difficult to avoid being found by Forrest than it was to find him. If for a little time he couldn't be found, it was decidedly prudent to be looking and listening in the most unexpected directions, from whence he was very likely to and often did, appear.

We found him or his men quickly, in our advance and along our flanks; and on the evening of Saturday, July 11th, drove a detachment of his men through Pontotoc, and some three or four miles out on the road toward Okolona, about twenty-five miles southeast of that place. Pontotoc lies about twenty miles directly west of Tupelo, and near twenty-five miles northwest of Okolona, thus making a triangle with Pontotoc at the northwest corner. Tupelo is a station on the railroad about twenty miles north of Okolona, where the rebel forces were lying strongly entrenched. Pontotoc was then a pretty little inland town of probably eight or ten hundred inhabitants; nearly all of the men being in the rebel service with Forrest, or elsewhere.

#### GUARDED HOMES OF ENEMY

After our skirmish through the town, and going into camp on the Okolona road, our Company K was sent back into town as provo guards for the protection of

persons and property, and we were quartered in the Baptist church. Soon after being quartered there, applications were made by numerous women, alone in their houses and with their children, for the detail of safeguards to stay with and protect them from molestation. Such details as could be spared were made, and in this way I was quartered at the home and residence of a Mrs. White and her family, her husband being off in the Confederate army.

We read much these days of the progress of the world in civilization and otherwise, but harking to the current tales from Mexico and the Balkans, it is rather comforting to the American soldier and citizen that he can look back to those days and such incidents as this, and realize that American homes and American families were so absolutely safe under the protection of safeguards of Federal soldiers. In my three years of service, I never knew personally of there occurring in the western army, on the part of our soldiers, only one of the aggravated atrocities so common in foreign wars, and that on the part of two soldiers in the vicinity of Memphis, Tennessee. I did not go to see the punishment inflicted, but I heard at a short distance away the volleys of the firing squad which executed the sentence of death of the courtmartial.

The men of company K were quartered in that Baptist church, but so far as I had knowledge, nothing in the way of desecration occurred, unless indeed the registering of the company in the church records as members thereof could be considered such, and I don't think that a house was entered by a soldier without invitation, nor a thing looted. I will record it now after fifty years—I think it worthy of record and no more than a just tribute to the American volunteer soldier, what he was, what he has been, what he is. In that company roster were names of men who afterward became mechanics, farmers, doctors, lawyers, editors, preachers, bankers, business men in practically every department, men who have held every kind of

county and some state offices, represented their state in house of representatives and senate, in congress, and in the judiciary of the district and supreme court. Nearly every one of them have been industrious and thrifty, and have reared families respectably, in comfortable independence, and nearly all who are yet living have accumulated such competence as to insure to them and their dependents comfortable livelihood. As I think it over it seems to me that no better, seriously purposed, honorable, moral and highminded men, with fewer failures in life, less intemperance, profligacy or vice, were ever assembled together. Nearly every one were from Mitchell county. Most of them were farm boys, and a large number had been schoolmates and friends.

Those boys had seen practically two years of war. Their average ages probably were not over twenty years on that day. I wonder when there will be another band of sixty to seventy, twenty-year-old American boys together of whom it can be said, after fifty years, that they did as much for their country in its extremest need, and also in the development—through fifty years of peace—of its high standard of morals and citizenship, and also for its material prosperity. Not all of those recorded there survived the war, and along the march of fifty years since, most of them have bade their comrades goodby and dropped out of the line.

The command rested over Sunday, the 12th, a little skirmishing being done in front of the advance post. Early on Monday morning, the 13th, a movement was begun directly east from Pontotoc toward Tupelo, by sending first the troops in and around Pontotoc out on the advance to Tupelo, as rapidly as they could march, and withdrawing gradually from the enemy's front toward Okolona, to become the rear of the movement on Tupelo.

Our company, being the provo guard in town, with some safeguards in residences, was the last to be re-

lieved and consequently was at the extreme rear of the corps in its new and rapid movement. The cavalry led, followed by infantry. Then came the train, artillery and infantry, with flankers and scouts of cavalry. Our regiment was at the head of the moving column and our company, after being relieved from duty, pushed forward as rapidly as possible to overtake the regiment, which it did at night just outside of the town of Tupelo.

#### FENCING IN OF FORREST

In making this movement General Smith, who was an old regular army officer, executed one of the most hazardous movements possible in war, moving by flank "in the face of the enemy." It was a most reckless thing to do, and had it resulted disastrously, would probably have caused disgrace and his dismissal from the army. It would have been easier to do and safer to attempt with almost any other rebel commander than Forrest. The movement was soon discovered, and while the flank of our column moved to the east it was all of the time exposed to the attack of Forrest from the south, and these attacks very soon began and there was much lively fighting along the line during the middle and latter part of the day. Quite a number of men were killed and wounded. A good many horses and mules and quite a lot of wagons in the train were destroyed.

The movement began so early and was so swiftly executed, however, that vigilant and active as Forrest was, in the evening our force was at and around Tupelo, faced to the south and rear and ready for anything that might happen. The advance of cavalry and infantry had also reached the railroad and torn up the track and destroyed all the railroad property in the vicinity which was destructible.

We lay there during the night of the 13th. On the morning of the 14th and just as most of the men were getting ready or eating such grub as they had with them, the ball opened. Forrest had moved practically

his entire command and was facing us from the south and west, ready, hoping and very possibly expecting to repeat the performance of Guntown with Sturgiss and his unfortunate command.

As usual, under such conditions, very hurried preparations were made; the long roll was beaten, the men fell in line and were quickly marched to their positions in the line. Our regiment was in the reserve, just behind a little elevation of ground, where we were ordered to lie down. The artillery in our rear fired over us, but only spent balls of the infantry of the enemy in our front could at that time reach us, and as a consequence we did not suffer severely.

When the firing began, one fellow in the company, Bart Hutchins, and a brave soldier too, had his little pail of coffee made, but had no time to drink it. He poured it hot as it was into his canteen, slung the canteen over his shoulder and took his place in the line. While lying down as stated, the spent balls came pretty plentifully. One hit James Borst, nearest me on the right hand. Another struck the edge of the stiff visor on Henry Guernsey's cap, nearest me on the left hand, but only bruising either of the boys hit. Bart was lying on his face, with that canteen of hot coffee on his back. A ball struck the canteen, cut it, and let the coffee out on his back. It seemed very funny at that time, as it always has since to all those, except Bart. When that scalding hot coffee ran out on his back he naturally thought his backbone had been shot in two, and he very naturally made such a noise as to induce the belief on the part of those near him, that Bart had had his last frolic. Since it was quickly ascertained what the trouble was, the occurrence has probably not been spoken or thought of, without a little merriment on the part of everyone, except Bart.

#### FORREST'S FIERCE FIGHTING

Then followed the fiercest fighting that Forrest ever did. Now, to those generally who were there on our side, his will hardly seem credible, but it is neverthe-

less true. I haven't the records at hand to cite specifically, but refer to the Confederate reports of this battle in the official records of the war, where I have read it several times. It is there shown that the Confederate loss, in proportion to the men engaged, was greater than in any other, or almost any other battle of the war. For years there was a dispute between Forrest and Stephen D. Lee and their respective friends and partisans, as to which one was really in command there, and the next day at Old Town creek, known more generally and especially among the Confederates as the second day of the battle of Tupelo, General Forrest was wounded in the foot, but not wholly disabled. General Stephen D. Lee came upon the field some time during the action, but each has claimed that the other was in actual command.

Anyhow those magnificent fighting fellows of Forrest were sent time and again, in charge after charge, against our forces and were as often driven back with most withering and destructive fire from our lines, which never for a moment gave way.

It would be interesting to those who were there to detail the various movements and occurrences during the day, but this is not a time nor place to do that. Toward night and after—I think it was—the fourth charge, the Confederates withdrew some distance and did not renew the action with any considerable spirit that day. Along in the evening they renewed the attack from the south and further to our left than the main action through the day. Our regiment was marched hurriedly out and put in the line of attack in a corn field, the corn being just about as far advanced in growth as the better fields of corn in Mitchell county are on this day. This little engagement didn't last long, and we saw no more of the enemy until morning. Forrest wasn't an easily discouraged individual, and sure enough when morning broke, there was plenty of evidence that he was not very far away.

Off in our front across open fields, it was nearly,



it seemed, a mile to a body of timber where evidently the enemy in that direction was located. I remember of our seeing a man come out of the woods a few rods, alone, into the open field, stop and apparently fire a rifle, for we could see the puff of smoke. There was time to smile over such a performance and enjoy it a little before the humming of the ball made its presence known, and before it was trimming the corn stalks in our immediate vicinity. The man stood there, his movements, except in walking, being invisible to us, but he loaded (for infantry guns were all muzzle-loaders then) and fired several shots. The bullets whistled in our immediate vicinity and cut the corn stalks or leaves close to us. What had at first appeared ludicrous, assumed a more serious aspect; but not a shot was fired in return and he, probably not realizing the seriousness of his operations, walked back into the woods and disappeared.

This movement of our detached little army, was a very important one in the strategy of the general advance toward the heart of the Confederacy. It permitted Sherman, further to the East, to make his magnificent advance on Atlanta without interruption by attack on his western flank by Forrest, Hooker, Chalmers and others with their combined forces. Sherman continued pressing Joe Johnston back, crushing him in battle or outflanking and compelling his retreat. On the 14th, at Tupelo, had been completely performed the difficult job of finding and defeating Forrest, which our corps had been ordered to do, and also of destroying the railroad for some distance above and below Tupelo, cutting that important line of rebel communication.

It was a rapidly moving expedition, without any base of supplies nearer than Grand Junction, Tennessee, and without any line of communication or supply in our rear. Such rations and ammunition as were expected to be required, were necessarily carried in the wagons, and it made up a long train, both difficult and dangerous to

handle and protect. No absolutely unnecessary delays could be permitted, but rapid movement was required to complete the work in hand and get back to a base of supplies.

#### TRAP SET FOR FORREST

On the morning of the 15th, today's anniversary; the enemy appearing to have had enough for that time, our column began its return movement, starting out to the northward, toward Old Town creek to the west of and near the line of railroad. No one ever had to complain of Forrest's lack of persistence, nor readiness to fight wherever he had half a chance for victory, nor when appearances indicated that "we-all" were trying to get away from him. Fully understanding this, General Mower with his cavalry set a trap, in the rear of our moving corps, and as anticipated, Forrest—or whoever was in immediate command—made a vigorous attack, running into the trap and suffering a very severe defeat, with quite a heavy loss to them, but with very slight loss to us.

This day, as had been several preceding days, was excessively hot even for Mississippi and in mid-July. Forrest's command was nearly all cavalry or mounted infantry and could move rapidly. Soon they began making attacks on our left flank, which they kept up in a desultory manner during nearly the entire day, but toward night quieted down, when, after descending quite a long hill of cultivated farms, and crossing the stream Old Town creek, we went into camp on a wide bottom of partly cultivated farms, and partly timbered land, having marched about ten miles from the field of the day before.

By some oversight our rear guard was not halted on the high grounds in our rear, but marched down the long slope, crossed the creek and went into camp with the others. This was right in the midst of the blackberry season, and the woods around near the camp had many blackberry briars with a great many very fine blackberries. About as soon as the men could get

their guns stacked and cartridge boxes off, they scattered all around camp picking blackberries, eating of them and filling their little coffee pails for supper. A few had eaten their suppers, others were making their coffee, while many others were still scattered around among the blackberry briars. Suddenly, and probably about six o'clock, fire was opened on us from a rebel battery on the hill, down which we had just marched, and which, on account of the rear guard not having been stopped there, was wholly unopposed until within easy range of our camp.

The timber along the creek which we had crossed, and which lay around and between us and the rebel battery, hid us entirely from their view and when they opened fire it was merely to shell the woods, and without any expectation that they were so near us, and without our having any rear guard to oppose them. The shells from their field battery were sent right into the midst of our camp, and while they created nothing whatever in the shape of panic, they did come as a very great surprise. This was one of the wholly inexcusable and almost unaccountable blunders or accidents, as you please to call it, which in fact often occur in war, and which sometimes result seriously or very disastrously.

Instantly the drums beat the long roll, the men begin falling in line, while those who were out gathering berries came running in from every direction, taking their places along the line of stacked arms as readily and with very little more confusion than men in a big thrashing crew would resume their work at and around the machine, upon an energetic call to return to their work, and with not half the excitement that frequently occurs around and at a fire in any town or city.

#### EXCITEMENT OF COUNTER ATTACK

A few would get a little excited. I can't refrain from recording an incident occurring there. One sergeant was in his place at the line. A member of the company, Pete Cyphers, later within an hour wounded

in the hand, being ordered to the rear, had the duty of carrying to the rear not only his own gun but that of Charles Sweney, so desperately wounded, and caring for them so that they would not fall into the hands of the enemy, and they did not. Cyphers came running in and took his place in the line, having in his hand his coffee pail full of blackberries. He was hot, tired and a trifle excited. He didn't know just how to get his accouterments on and his gun in his hands and care for his blackberries at the same time, and looking at the sergeant, he said, "I don't know what to do with my berries." "Give them to me," said the sergeant, "and I will take care of them." Pete did so, and while the line was being completed and accouterments adjusted the sergeant succeeded, by making haste, in disposing of all of the berries and handed back, just as the line moved out, the empty pail, to the chagrined and somewhat disgusted Pete. That was all of the supper though that sergeant had that night.

The two regiments, Twenty-seventh and Thirty-second of our Iowa brigade were marched immediately back through the timber, and waded the creek out to the open field on the south side. We marched for a little way along the road by which we had come across the bottom, and could see up the road on the hill, the battery firing rapidly at us and into our camp from the hill, and probably little, if any, more than half a mile away.

John Prime had started out on the expedition, or had somewhere on the way annexed a pair of boots which he had undertaken to use in place of the army shoe. The leather chafed his ankles so that he had cut off the tops, leaving the unlaced feet of the boots, and in them a pair of pretty sore feet. The creek, which we had to plunge into and wade through, was muddy, and in crossing, those boot soles stuck to the creek bottom, and he came out on the south side in his bare feet; and so continued through the briars and bushes into the open field, and through the action.

When we reached the open field at the south side of the wood, our regiment was deployed to the right and west of the road, and the Thirty-second Iowa to the left and the east of the road, and in the open field facing the enemy. They had caught us most handsomely and were doing all they could to take advantage of the situation. Running along close to the woods was a fence at the north side of the cleared farms, and after getting over the fence our lines were re-formed and the advance was begun. The day before, a little bit of skulking had been done; and as the line was here re-formed for the advance, Captain Granger, in front of and in command of the company at the time, said to the sergeants, "If any man attempts to leave the line without permission, shoot him down, damn him!"

The line was immediately started forward. Not a man skulked, nor attempted to leave the line; but all went forward with the steadiness of a regiment on drill, up through that open field under a heavy fire, in plain view of many of the enemy, including the battery, commanding officers and other horsemen riding and directing the attack. The standing corn prevented the infantry lines from seeing the opposing lines distinctly, but the fire was insistent, while our advance was steady and uninterrupted for some time.

It is difficult to measure time exactly under such conditions, and especially after such a long lapse; but it did not take more than probably fifteen to twenty minutes' advance in the open field and under fire and firing, until we struck their main line in the corn field which delivered very sharp fires; and where our own line was ordered to halt and lie down, and where for a little time the fire from both sides was very sharp and insistent.

Then, the fire from the enemy slackened and they retreated as our advance began once more; their loss there being small in either killed, wounded or missing. During the advance through the field, certain rebel horsemen were particularly conspicuous, one being For-

rest himself and another his chief of artillery, a Captain Morton, who personally placed that battery in position, and who was afterward a prominent business man in the city of Nashville. Some years after the war I met and became acquainted with and spent considerable time for a week with him, a most companionable and fine gentleman, with whom I talked over all of the operation of these two days; also the operations of Forrest's men during their entire western campaign, and during which much of the time he was on Forrest's staff as his chief of artillery.

#### WHEN CHARLEY WAS HIT

Just after the fire of the rebels slackened there in the cornfield, a member of Company K, William Houghton, came to me and hallooed in my ear, "Charley's shot!" I had been in the service then nearly two years. Charley was my older brother, but had recently come to the command. It seemed to me before, and since, that there had scarcely been a minute, since he was with the company and we were in the field of active operation, that my mind had not been burdened with solicitude for him. I was the older, "not the better" soldier; probably he had been at least equally anxious about me. I know that the day before, at Tupelo, while we were on reserve line and lying down as I stated, he "jacked" me up for standing up, contrary to orders, with the statement that I would rather be shot than to die from the heat with my nose in the dust.

At the moment when Houghton yelled that in my ear, and probably for a little time preceding, I had entirely lost thought of him and I turned to Houghton and yelled back, "Charley who?" He called back to me within a foot or two of my ear, "Charley Sweney." Then it all came to me; all of my anxiety and fears for his safety were realized; all that I had been dreading had come to pass, and all or the worst of disaster which could come to a brother on the battle field had come to me and I was completely overwhelmed. He took me to him, probably not over two or three

rods to the left of where I was. There I found him lying crumpled up on his right side, his gun lying, I think, partly under him. I raised him up; as I did so he reached with left hand across his breast for his right arm, and not feeling it with his left hand, he said, "It's gone!" An old-fashioned minnie ball apparently had struck his right arm probably five or six inches below the shoulder joint, shattering the bone and cutting the arm nearly half off in its passage through. The arm below the wound had turned back, and when he reached across for it, it was out of his reach, so he thought it entirely gone. When he was erect enough to permit the arm to hang down, the half-severed part hung loosely.

He fainted very quickly after raising him up. The day had been intensely hot. There had been the lengthy march, then this movement and charge up through the field, and his blood was probably as hot as it is possible for human blood to be. I had filled my canteen at the creek when we forded it, coming out, and fortunately it was full of water. I poured some on his breast, arms, and face and revived him.

While with him there, Peter Cypher, being very near, came to me, holding up his bloody hand showing a finger shot away. I told him to take his gun and go to the rear, but as he started, called him back and picked up and handed him Charley's gun, telling him to take that back with him and take care of it also. He did this, though he was under no obligation to do so. Poor Pete was a good and faithful soldier. He went to his rest a good many years ago.

Very soon after that occurred, and while I was still with Charley, our other Pete, rollicking, jolly Pete Fritcher, being in that immediate vicinity, turned his shoulder to my gaze. A bullet had passed through his shoulder, completely disabling him, and I told him to go to the rear also, which he did.

The firing had by this time almost ceased excepting the artillery, and of that there were only occasional

shots. I went to the right a few rods away, where Captain Granger was, and told him that Charley was shot in the arm and seriously wounded. I did not know at that time that my brother also was shot in the thigh, the more serious wound of the two. Granger told me to get someone to help me and carry Charley off the field. It was the theory of military organization that members of the regimental bands would, in case of skirmish or battle, follow the command and with stretchers carrying off the wounded to the field hospital. No musicians showed up on that occasion, and seldom did under like circumstances, until things resumed their nearly normal condition.

I turned at once to Charley, and with the help of Willie Houghton and a Corporal Schulz of Company E, I laid him in my rubber poncho, and taking it by the ends we started to the rear with him. He soon fainted again and I thought for a time that he was dead or dying. I found that the blood was pouring out of his wounds and that there were quarts of it in the rubber poncho in which he was being carried. We laid him down; I tore the sleeve out of his blouse and took a handkerchief, which strangely enough I had with me, and bound his arm above the wound, drawing it as tight as possible, thus in a measure stopping the flow of blood, and I have always believed that without that operation he would not have lived fifteen minutes longer. He fainted several times on the way back while we were carrying him, letting him down at frequent intervals, and pouring water onto his breast, face and arms, and finally we met the band men with the stretchers, which afforded a much more comfortable and convenient means of carrying him. We carried him back down close to the bridge over which we had originally crossed over Old Town creek; crossed the road to the east side of it, and laid him with a number of other wounded men on the porch, or gallery, as they call it in Mississippi, of one of the houses making up the little hamlet of Old Town creek.



## THE CRUDE FIELD HOSPITAL

The field hospital was established under trees a few rods from this house and close to the bank of the creek. This field hospital consisted of an operating table about the size of a carpenter's bench, put up of rough boards, one end of it being attached to a big tree. Here during the evening and night, the wounded were operated upon, and the amputated arms and legs lying by that table toward morning, presented a spectacle which after fifty years' recollection confirms the truth of Sherman's statement that "war is hell," and the statement of Bacon, I think it is, that "war is the child of hell."

We all know that dread of danger; the love of life is the fundamental instinct. Few people can conceive of conditions which overcome this instinct, and subordinate it as a thing beneath the consideration of man. Times of peace and the usual current of life produce no such conditions, and generations living only in such times and currents can hardly be inspired by such superhuman exaltation. I think there was an approach to it on the part of some of the men who went down on the Titanic. That was heroic and magnificent, but it was only a swirl in the current of the lives of individuals, a heroic sacrifice of the stronger for the weaker.

On that gallery close to where Charley lay was a wounded man from another regiment, when they were first brought in; a man whose abdomen was largely torn away by a shell so that his intestines were exposed, and he was suffering about all that man can suffer. This was before dark and very soon after the fighting was over. He asked me when I came there, "How has the fight gone?" I said to him, "We have whipped them, we have driven them off the field, we have won the day!" He said, "Good. I can die contented." Those were his last words, and within five minutes of uttering them he was dead.

I do not know his name nor his company nor regiment, but I have never forgotten that scene, I have

never forgotten that hero; the content and happiness with which he died for his country, fifty years ago today and almost at this hour of the day. That man was buried there by that little stream, Old Town creek, in Mississippi. So far as I know, no stone nor monument of any kind ever marked his resting place, and the place where his ashes lie is wholly unknown, but there were thousands, tens of thousands who died like he did, forgetful of any dread of death; forgetting all earthly treasures and prospects, subordinating all hopes, loves and earthly ties, all fear of future punishment for sins, all fear of meeting face to face their God. This is how love of kindred, home and native land can possess the man. This is what love of country means to the man in the hour of his country's peril. It is with this spirit and with such exaltation that in a just cause he follows his country's flag to battle.

I helped the surgeons carry the wounded to the operating table, and in many cases to administer the chloroform and watch the amputations and help to carry the unconscious ones, to lay them on the ground under the trees in the vicinity. One fellow, a cavalry man whose leg was shattered above the knee, was placed on the table. He very decidedly refused to make use of chloroform, and finally the surgeons went to work without its use. He sat upon the boards, gripping his leg with both hands above the shattered bone, and watched them cut the flesh and saw the bone and take away the entire lower part of his leg, including his knee, with never a whimper, and only a groan or two as the saw went through the bone.

It took the greater part of the night for the doctors present to make the necessary amputations, and it was nearly one o'clock when Charley was placed on the table for the amputation of his arm. In these days it is claimed that very many wounds which were then fatal or required amputations are now successfully treated and amputations avoided. I have no belief, however, that under the conditions there existing, his arm could have been saved. The operation was performed

by Dr. Sanborn of our regiment, and a very poor job was done, I always believed. A minnie ball went into his thigh below and in front of the hip joint and passed through in some way backward and upward, and lodged not far from the back bone, and at its right side, from which it was cut out at Mitchell by Doctors Chase and Turner in the winter of 1867, more than three years after.

I stayed with Charley and helped to administer the chloroform, and until he became unconscious. Then I turned away, not being able to see the operation itself performed, but I insisted to Dr. Sanborn that he ought then to remove the bullet from the thigh, and had a row with him because he would not even attempt to do so. I have never ceased to believe that I was right about it and that he was wrong. Charley carried the bullet for over three years, with a frightful wound, unhealed during the entire time except an occasional very brief time; the hollow bullet, battered as it was on the bones, together with fragments of clothing carried in with it and the burnt powder, remaining and poisoning him during all those years. The bullet was finally removed, and he has it in his possession. It would seem almost incredible that a person could carry it in the body thus and survive. I got a shovel, and along soon after the operation took the arm out at a little distance and buried it under a tree. Nothing marked the place where it was laid.

#### THE PERILS OF THE WOUNDED

The command would move promptly in the morning. The ambulances and empty wagons were filled with wounded, and the order was issued to leave the most severely wounded there in the few houses of the village, and with such temporary provision as could be made. I went to Captain Granger, and with his permission, to our good Colonel Gilbert and got permission for an order to stay and take care of Charley and help take care of other wounded. I got that order; and then I thought more about it. Here is was the 16th of

July; intense heat, away from any hospital supplies, Charley most desperately wounded, and within an hour after our column would move we would be in the hands of the enemy and within their lines, with the very scant supplies and appliances which they would, with even their best efforts, supply us. I did not believe that it would be possible for him to live under such conditions, and I went to work to arrange if possible, to get him away with the other wounded. Finally I found an ambulance in which was a man with a not serious fracture of the arm, and another, a First Illinois cavalryman, whose left arm had been amputated in the night just about even with Charley's right arm. I got Charley into the bed of the ambulance along side of this cavalryman, and got the other wounded man up on the seat with the driver. I gathered about a dozen canteens from among the debris of the field, and kept them filled with water as fresh as could be gotten from that time on until, four or four and one-half days afterward, we reached the railroad. The canteens were hung on to the ambulance and filled with fresh water as often as I could do so, or get someone else to do it for me; often giving a darky a quarter or half a dollar, to get the water, while the column was constantly moving along the road.

Well, we got away along in the forenoon, and I took care of the two wounded men lying in the ambulance box; about all that could be done for them being to give them water to drink and to lay cloths, wet with cold water, on the stubs of their arms. In the afternoon one of our ambulance horses gave out, so that we had to stop often while the command passed us. The horse would occasionally lie down, and they could hardly draw the ambulance up any sort of an incline. The train guard along our part of the line, consisting of a thin line of infantry on each side of the road, was a regiment of colored infantry.

#### RODE IN BLOOD AND DIRT

During the day a sergeant went with me into a house

where we got a feather bed, bed clothing and pillows, and brought out and put on the bed of the ambulance, and placed Charley and the cavalryman on that; and there they rode in the dirt and blood with which they were smeared, until four and a half days after the battle we reached Grand Junction, east of Memphis, and the hospital train which had been sent out to meet us. I don't know the name of that black sergeant, nor what became of him. I hope, however, that he was not one of those long service sergeants in hospital or on detached service who were "discharged without honor" by reason of their battalion shooting up Brownsville, Texas. I should much regret to know that anything but a "square deal" had come to him.

During the afternoon and evening, the entire command including the rear guard had passed us and we were left probably several miles in their rear, when they went into camp. We didn't get inside of the lines until about one o'clock in the morning. I found that the wounds of my two charges had become alive with maggots. After getting inside of the lines I went and hunted up Dr. Sanborn to come and dress their wounds and take out the maggots. He refused to do so, and I went on and found Dr. Olney, surgeon of the Thirty-second Iowa, and then acting as brigade surgeon. (These surgeons are both dead, but I am glad to make a record here in accord with my ideas of justice to each one.) Dr. Olney went with me, at about three o'clock in the morning, and took the bandages and plasters off from those amputated arms, removed the maggots, cleansed them thoroughly and dressed them again. After that I succeeded in keeping the maggots out most of the time, but by the most strenuous and consistent endeavor. I only had to call on the surgeons to help me once or twice after that.

On the 16th, owing to the delay referred to, we had nothing whatever to eat after starting, until after we got within the lines. We stopped near the camp of the Sixth Minnesota regiment, and in the immediate prox-

imity of that regiment's band. They were among the last to get into camp ahead of us. They had killed a goat and were cooking the meat when we arrived, and they most generously divided with the wounded men in our ambulance and with the driver and myself. I never ate goat meat before nor since, but judging from my experience then it is a little the best meat that was ever invented. It agreed well on the average, too, with the wounded men, for Charley and the cavalryman, desperately wounded as they were, finally recovered and corresponded with each other for a time. What became of him later I don't know. The slightly wounded man, who was put up on the seat with the driver, reached the hospital all right, but gangrene got into his wounded arm, and he died.

The 17th and succeeding days, until we reached the hospital train, were substantial repetitions of the 16th. The weather was of a temperature unknown to Iowa, from 100° upward every day. The roads were rough; here was very little to eat and nothing what ever in the way of special food for sick or wounded.

#### THE MIRACLE OF CLEAN DRESSINGS

On that day a comrade of the Illinois cavalryman brought to me at the ambulance a bolt of white muslin. Where he got it I never could more than conjecture, and I never overexerted myself in that line of effort. It was of all things, that most needed. I could tear off a piece of it, wet it with cold water from the canteens, take off a similar piece from the wounds of the men, throw that away and replace it with the fresh wet muslin. Under the canvas cover of an ambulance, on the road in the sunshine in such a temperature, one can only wonder that it was possible for human beings to live, without considering the condition of these men. The heat was such as to almost burn. The flies would swarm under the cover open at both ends, attracted by the blood and superations from the wounds. I never, aside from that experience, knew that it would be possible, but I saw it time and again

there, that after putting fresh muslin, wet in cold water on those superating wounds, with the flies swarming around and lighting on them, that in less than half an hour the maggots, would be crawling all over those wet cloths. It was only by the frequent throwing away of those saturated cloths, fly-blown and frequently almost alive with maggots, and covering the wounds again with the freshly wet muslin, that the wounds could by any possibility be kept from the maggots.

I don't think that there was a half-hour during day or night, from the time of our starting from Old Town creek on the 16th, until we reached Grand Junction, Tennessee, and the hospital train on the 21st, near noon, that I did not dress those wounds, and with no medicine nor any other application than the fresh water; cold as I could get it.

About noon of the 21st, we reached Grand Junction, Tennessee, and found awaiting us a hospital train, as it was called. This consisted of box freight cars, swept out and made as clean as practicable. In these were cots to lay the men on. There was also food for them, and ice water and dressings to apply to their wounds, and these in charge of men detailed for that purpose. The wounded were quickly transferred to these cars and in the afternoon and evening we ran into Memphis, about fifty miles away. We reached Memphis along quite late in the evening. The wounded were transferred from the cars in ambulances, Charley and the others before in my charge, being taken to the Gayoso hospital; since the war, as it was before a hotel; and having recently been replaced by a great new structure. I stayed with them to the hospital, where they were taken in charge by white-capped angels of mercy, angels of mercy indeed they were, acting in connection with the Christian commission which did so much good and relieved so much misery during the war.

The men nurses took them in charge, removing their

clothing, stiff and clotted with dried blood and accumulation of dirt, none of which it had been possible to remove from the time of the battle, except to wash off with a wet rag their hands and faces. They were bathed; clean night dresses were put on them; they were put onto cots between clean white sheets, and I stayed until Charley was asleep, about two o'clock in the morning.

Then, almost too dazed and worn to know the fairly familiar directions in Memphis, I hunted and found the stopping place of our comrades of Company K, good Halsey C. Boyd and G. C. Worst, who were on detached service as printers in a government printing office in Memphis, and who took me into their shelter, and along some time in the morning put me to bed. Both died years on.

From the time he was shot until he went to sleep in the hospital, Charley didn't grumble nor complain, and I think that he hardly groaned except when under anesthetic. Whether or not he had any expectation of living, I do not know, and I do not think the question caused him near the anxiety that it did me. During that time I do not think that he expected, and I am sure that I didn't, that he and I would be living fifty years from that date.

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## Iowa Population Replacements

About twenty tons of babies are born in Iowa every month! That's what the state division of vital statistics told the *Des Moines Register*. The average baby weighs 7.4 pounds at birth. (Boys average 7.5, girls 7.3). Last year 63,624 babies were born in this state, or more than 470,000 pounds total. That's almost 40,000 pounds a month, or nearly twenty tons.



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